

COAST GUARD

ISSUE 3, 2011
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1937 COAST GUARD FLOOD RESPONSE

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Vice Commandant
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Cover: Members of the Coast Guard and Cass County Sheriff Department operate airboats to familiarize themselves with flooded areas in the event they need to assist residents, near Hickson, N. D., April 9. Photo by PA3 Seth Johnson.





CLEAN-UP TIME

Oil spill response workers place sorbent pads and boom in the water to collect fuel leaking from a yacht that sunk in its slip in the Coronado Cays due to a fire, March 25. The San Diego and Coronado, Calif., fire departments extinguished the fire, and the Coast Guard coordinated the containment and removal of pollution with oil spill response organizations. Coast Guard photo by PA2 Henry G. Dunphy.



JOINT RESCUE

AST3 Erich Klingner, AMT2 Michael Gustaveson and an Air National Guard pararescuer from the 212th Rescue Squadron transfer one of two patients injured in a small plane crash near Cape Suckling from a Coast Guard MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter in Cordova to an Air National Guard HC-130 Hercules aircraft for further transport to Anchorage, May 6. Photo by AST1 Scott Gordon.



NO STEP

KODIAK

HOIST 100%
MOORING 100%



EXT PWR
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SETTING AN EXAMPLE

Enlisted Person of the Year AMTC Troy Brevik and Reserve Enlisted Person of the Year HS1 William Hilt congratulate each other during a ceremony at Coast Guard Headquarters, May 27. Photo by PA2 Patrick Kelley.



TEAMWORK

The Coast Guard men's whaleboat rowing team competes in the Coast Guard Challenge in the Alameda-Oakland estuary, April 30. Twenty-one teams rowed approximately two miles circling Coast Guard Island in Alameda. The Coast Guard men's team won first place, the women's and co-ed teams took third. The Coast Guard men's team remains undefeated since fall 2010. Photo by PAC Sarah B. Foster.



NEW QUEEN OF THE FLEET

Commandant and Gold Ancient Mariner Adm. Bob Papp and Silver Ancient Mariner BMCM Steven Hearn pose with the crew of CGC Smilax after a relief of watch ceremony in Atlantic Beach, N.C., April 14. The event was part of the celebration of the Smilax becoming the Queen of the Fleet as the oldest cutter, commissioned in 1944. Photo by PA2 Patrick Kelley.



SCIENCE PARTNERSHIP

Kevin Verdini, a ninth-grade student from the New London, Conn., Science and Technology Magnet High School, watches as Coast Guard Second Class Cadets George Thomas and Justin Redman conduct a physics experiment, March 30, at the Coast Guard Academy in New London. Verdini is one of 18 students who visited the academy for a Science Partnership for Innovation in Learning program, hosted by the academy's science department. The program is designed to foster a relationship with the local community by providing students college experience and introducing them to opportunities available in the science field. Photo by PA1 NyxoLyno Cangemi.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Coast Guard Honor Guard and Silent Drill Team perform at the Telecommunications and Information Systems Command in Alexandria, Va., March 12. The performance was part of a community-outreach event for local Boy and Girl Scout troops and other youth organizations. Photo by PA2 Patrick Kelley.



CLEANING UP

BMC Jeremiah Moon, with the North Pacific Regional Fisheries Training Center, ties a bag full of garbage collected from Jewel Beach, May 6, on Coast Guard base Kodiak. The crew took advantage of the good weather and held their annual Earth Day cleanup. Photo by PA3 Charly Hengen.



Skills Testing

Coast Guard Aviation Maintenance Technicians at National Competition

Story and photo by
PA1 Adam Eggers,
PADET LA/LB

Wilbur Wright once said, “It is possible to fly without motors, but not without knowledge and skill.” For a small group of Coast Guard aviators from across the country, the 2011 AMT Society Maintenance Skills Competition gave them the opportunity to test theirs.

This year marked only the second time a team of Coast Guard members took part in the annual competition, held in Las Vegas.

“I’m proud of what we do,” said AMTCM Rich Schultz, the rating force master chief for aviation maintenance technicians. “The Coast Guard is small and aviation is only a part of what we do, but we’re proud of how well we do it.”

The weeklong competition featured 12 different stations to test mechanics’, knowledge in areas such as electrical troubleshooting, flight control rigging, advanced composite materials repair, and safety wiring. It featured commercial airline teams from Mexico and Australia as well as U.S. military teams from the Coast Guard, Air Force, and Navy.

Aside from their mechanical prowess, Team Coast Guard stood out as the only team comprised of members who had never met prior to the competition.

“I had one guy come up and say he thought it was a great idea to select members from all over the country. He said they took the best from their base and they’ve been training together for months for this competition,” noted Schultz. “It’s unbelievable. It’s a great statement for the Coast Guard and the aviation standardization program that we are able to do this.”

Not only were the Coast Guard mechanics from different units, they also worked on different aircraft.

AMT2 Jon Deitsch repairs MH-65 Dolphin helicopters at Air Station Atlantic City, N.J.; AMT2 Matt Youngs cranks wrenches on HC-130 Hercules airplanes at Air Station Kodiak, Alaska; AMT1 Frank Fontanez works on HC-144 Ocean Sentry airplanes at the Aviation Training Center in Mobile, Ala.; while AET1 Jason Ford, the lone Avionics Electrical Technician of the group, chases wires on MH-65 Dolphin helicopters at Air Station Traverse City, Mich.

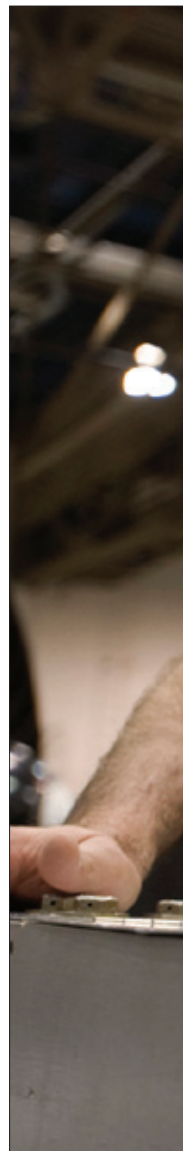
“I feel really, really good about it,” said Fontanez. “With the Air Force, they have guys from the same unit. Then they see us from different units and who fly on different aircraft ... I feel proud.”

The impact of the aviation standardization program was something that members of Team Coast Guard noted as being vital to their ability to compete in such an event with other aviators.

“It just shows that in the Coast Guard, you can plug any team together and we’re going to get the job done,” said Youngs, the only returning member from the previous year’s team. “It blows the other team’s mind. They’re like ‘wow, you guys just met?’”

While the competition may seem to outsiders like a good excuse to spend a week in Las Vegas, the overall benefit is to highlight and reinforce the value of the Coast Guard’s standardized training program among its members and the public.

“I definitely have more experience





TAKING THE TEST


now,” said Deitsch. “The whole studying process to prepare for this, just makes you more knowledgeable. Some of this stuff we rarely do.”

While the team members never had a chance to get together and train for the events, each Coast Guardsman took it upon themselves to dive into the manuals.

“I get to come here and compete, but at the same time I’m spending a lot of time in the books during the build-up, which helps me overall. I got into the manuals a lot. I re-familiarized myself with all the steps and regulations,” said Youngs.

The passion that these four individuals demonstrated in preparing for the competition is actually part of the reason they were selected to compete. Deitsch, Youngs, and Ford were finalists for the Oliver Berry Award, an annual

award given to an aviator that, through innovation, brought forth an idea or process that benefited Coast Guard aviation as a whole. This year’s recipient, Fontanez, played a vital role in the mechanical understanding of the Ocean Sentry airplane.

While Team Coast Guard finished the competition just off the podium, an undaunted Schultz provided a dose of reality. “You can go home tonight and watch television and you’ll see a rescue done by the Coast Guard. You have to feel proud about that, even if you weren’t involved in the search or anything, you’ll still feel proud.” 

AET1 Jason Ford works to complete the safety wiring event while AMTCM Rich Schultz looks on during the AMT Society’s Aviation Maintenance Skills competition, Feb. 24.

Combat Simulator

Story by
Sgt. Ray Reyes,
New Jersey National Guard

Coast Guardsmen who normally patrol the high seas for drug runners or environmental hazards were the first behind the wheel of the latest, high-tech, combat convoy simulator at Fort Dix, N.J.

The Coast Guard's Redeployment Assistance Inspection Detachment Team 13 was the first military unit to ever use the newly-fielded Reconfigurable Vehicle Tactical Trainer simulator, taking part in simulated Afghanistan defensive combat situations, April 2. The RAID Team had been undergoing Army basic combat skills training at the mobilization station for a month.

"The RVTT simulator is an invaluable tool since it combines elements of all of the training the team has acquired from the Army over the past month at Fort Dix, and actually puts it together in real-time scenarios in deployed environments," said RAID training officer, Lt. James Cullen.

The Coast Guardsmen were trained on the RVTT in preparation for their upcoming deployment to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. Working closely with Army units, forward-deployed Coast Guard RAID members oversee hazardous materials movement from remote locations in combat zones. Most RAID members work in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kuwait.

The RVTT simulator, which was installed in February, is the newest part of the military's growing arsenal of realistic simulations at Fort Dix. Military personnel in a convoy of full-sized vehicles can feel a simulated rumbling of their engines in their seats, hear the engine roar louder as the vehicles accelerate, and hear gunshots and feel recoil as they fire their weapons to fend off the enemy. As the military relies more heavily on advanced simulations to prepare war fighters for combat, realism has become a key aspect to training. If the RVTT was any more lifelike, the RAID team would have needed to clean bugs off their windshields.



SURVEYING THE LAND

SK2 Benjamin J. Kiger surveys the landing zone as a U.S. Army UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter lands to transport his team. Kiger, a reservist, is a member of the Coast Guard Redeployment Assistance & Inspection Detachment team. Coast Guard photo by Lt. James Cullen.



SIMULATION TRAINER

The RVTT system is unlike most traditional computer simulators or engagement skills trainers because it surrounds personnel in a realistic, 360-degree virtual world.

The RVTT system consists of a series of trailers equipped with life-size replicas of four Humvees surrounded by floor-to-ceiling movie screens. These simulators contain everything found in the real tactical vehicle, to include secure radios, individual and crew-served weapons, and current command and control systems. Troops familiar with the equipment require only moments to be fully operational in the simulator. An additional trailer provides a training room, command and control, and full after action review capabilities.


Cullen, who recently completed a RAID Team combat tour in the Middle East and now serves as the RAID Team training officer, arranged for his students to have the opportunity to train on the new equipment because he felt the RVTT was very realistic. Cullen recalled during one convoy training exercise he experienced motion sickness because he was so involved in the simulator's realism.

"The simulators can convince you that

you're really there," said Cullen.

One of the RVTT's features is its ability to change the type of vehicle configuration to suit the training. For example, the dashboard for the RAID Team's exercises was configured to High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle using a touch screen display. Another change inside the vehicle can replicate driver and convoy training. If another training unit will be conducting missions using a Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck, a touch of the button and exchange of a few cosmetic pieces makes the vehicle ready for training.

During these tough economic times, the RVTT provides a cost-effective option to military units who want more training for the buck, said RVTT simulator supervisor Bret Bussman, of Young America, Minnesota. As the Warrior Training contract manager, Bussman noted that with the current economy "everybody is looking for cutbacks."

Using an on-site virtual reality simulator saves fuel and ammunition costs, and provides more training in less time than if personnel were actually taking their own vehicles and weapons out to remote training areas. 

Coast Guardsmen from Raid Detachment 13 preparing for deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan, review real world convoy procedures before undergoing simulation training at Dix's Reconfigurable Vehicle Tactical Trainer. Photo by Lt. James Cullen.



Tsunami Repair

Story by LT Johna N. Rossetti, Sector Columbia River

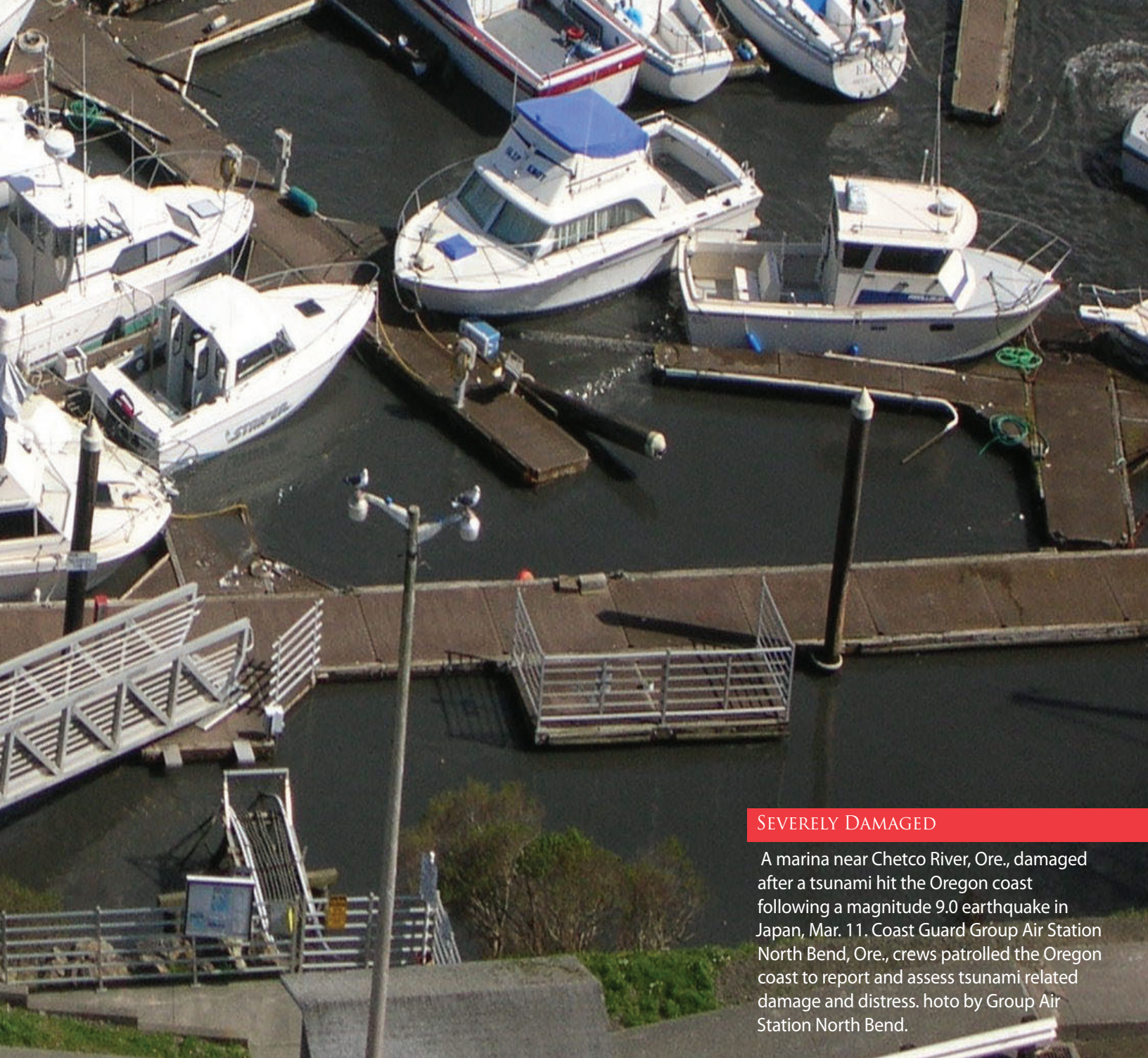
One of the largest recorded earthquakes occurred Mar. 11, when a 9.0 magnitude earthquake hit off the coast of Japan and generated a tsunami in the Pacific Northwest. A small town in southern Oregon was one of the coastal communities impacted by this phenomenon when wave surges tore through the harbor in Brookings, Ore., severely damaging commercial and recreational docks and sinking several boats. Brookings is a small crab, salmon

and shrimp commercial fishing community and one of the busiest ports in Oregon.

Within a few hours of receiving notifications that Brookings harbor had been hit and Chetco River, Ore., was impacted, Sector Columbia River Incident Management Division deployed three members from Portland, Ore., and followed with two additional responders from the Astoria, Ore., office the next morning. To expedite the arrival of the first team, an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter from Air Station Astoria transported them

more than 340 miles, allowing the team to begin coordinating response operations and reduce the impact on the marine environment.

Sector Columbia River Incident Management Division synchronized efforts with Station Chetco River, Group/Air Station North Bend, the Brookings Harbormaster and other agencies to account for vessels and evaluate the extent of the damage to the port. During the evaluation, they discovered several boats in various states of despair, oil sheen in



SEVERELY DAMAGED


A marina near Chetco River, Ore., damaged after a tsunami hit the Oregon coast following a magnitude 9.0 earthquake in Japan, Mar. 11. Coast Guard Group Air Station North Bend, Ore., crews patrolled the Oregon coast to report and assess tsunami related damage and distress. Photo by Group Air Station North Bend.

80 percent of the marina, three vessels swept out to sea and one sailing boat torn from the moorings and sunk in the middle of the basin causing a navigational obstruction for boaters. When it was determined the owner of the sailing vessel did not have the means to mitigate the pollution threat from his vessel, the team quickly mobilized contractors and oversaw dive operations. The swift actions of the pollution responders and federal on-scene coordinator representative facilitated debris removal from the marina and

the recovery of 30 gallons of hazardous material removed from the sunken sailing vessel. Port commerce was shut down for 72 hours due to safety, pollution and navigation concerns within the harbor which limited port services.

"All units exemplified our core value, 'devotion to duty,' in their preparation and response to the natural disaster that impacted our coastline," said Sector Capt. Len Tumbarello, Columbia River Deputy Commander. "Quick actions by Coast Guard personnel have Brookings well on

its way to a full recovery."

Collaboration among Sector Columbia River Incident Management Division, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, 13th District Liaison to the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Pollution Fund Center supported a request for federal assistance from the Stafford Act which was later implemented by John Kitzhaber, Oregon Governor, when he declared a State of Emergency in Curry County. 



DART to the Rescue

Story by
Lt. Stephanie Young,
CG Social Media

For those on the outside looking in, Coast Guard servicemembers operating in our nation's heartland may seem a far cry from our seagoing tradition; but, a select group of Coast Guard men and women are showing that being part of a maritime service is not just about being on the high seas. These "shallow water sailors" find their call to action not in the depths of the ocean but on the flooded streets of disaster-stricken American cities.

These groups of Coast Guard members come together in times of crisis and are known as Disaster Area Response Teams. DART crews, armed with flat bottom boats containing rescue and communications equipment and supplies, have the unique ability to conduct operations in shallow water and urban environments.

While you don't often hear of people wanting to join the Coast Guard to become part of a DART, you do hear of people who want



STACKING SAND BAGS

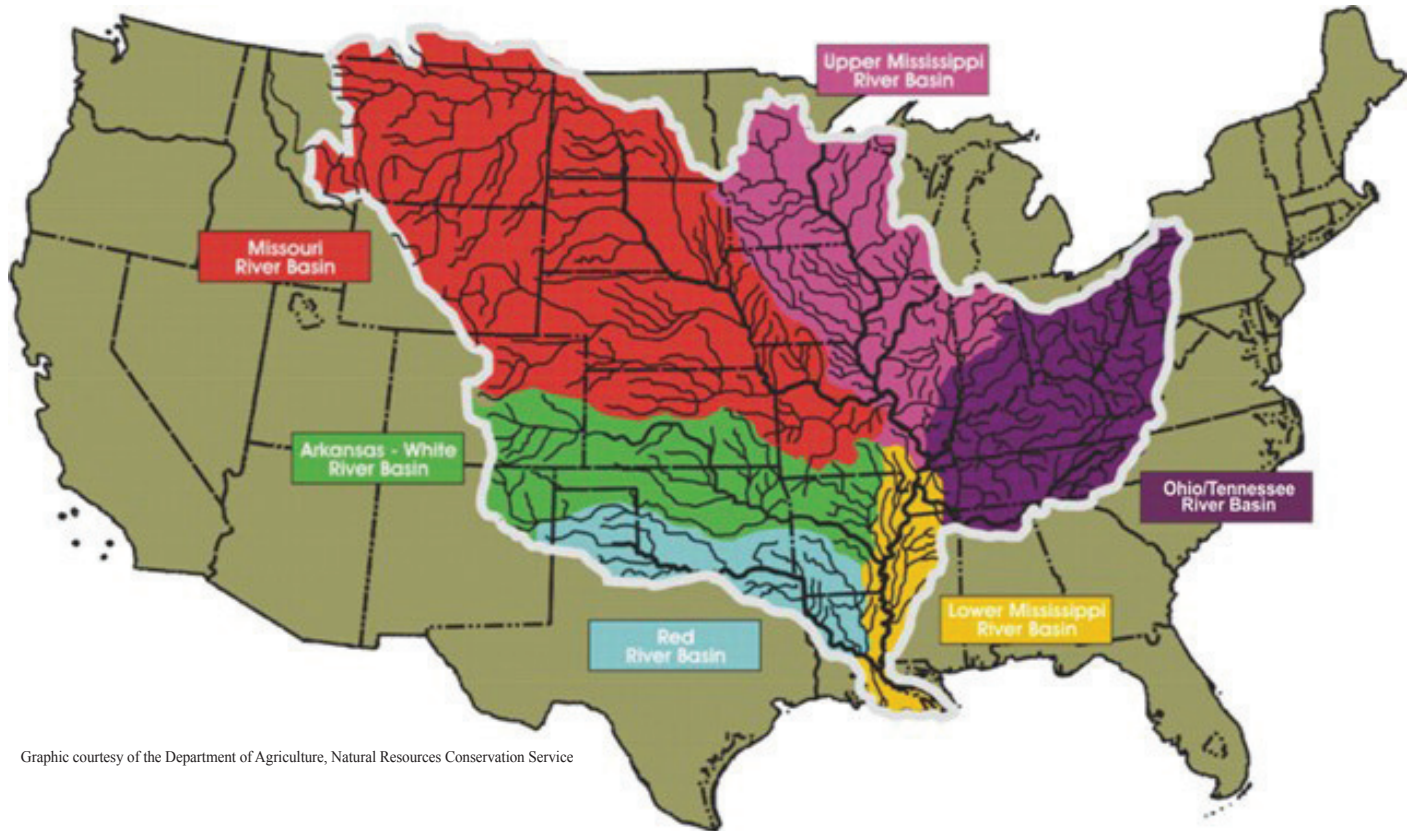
to join to save lives. And that is just what the men and women who make up disaster area response teams do.

One of these lifesavers is Lt. Sean Morrison. As a Coast Guardsman with Marine Safety Detachment Nashville, Tenn., Morrison finds himself on his first tour on the western rivers and is one of hundreds of local, state and federal responders who deployed in response to this year's seasonal flooding on the Mississippi River system.

Following a natural disaster, DART crewmembers depart their units and deploy to the very heart of submerged towns. While DART crews are thrust into a response, there is specialized training that prospective members undergo beforehand. The training occurs every three months and covers skills such as maneuverability in shallow water, first aid, trailering boats and of course, search and rescue. After classroom instruction, DART

A member of Marine Safety Detachment Cincinnati, Ohio's, Disaster Area Response Team tosses a sandbag to BMCS Darren Cliffe, as the two men attempt to save a house from rising floodwaters in Brookport, Ill., May 4. Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco.

crewmembers undergo a comprehensive qualification process that includes demonstrating practical knowledge and boat handling skills.



Graphic courtesy of the Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Training for prospective members is open to anyone in the service, regardless of rank or rate, which creates a varied pool of responders. The diversity of backgrounds and experience in DART crews is a substantial benefit, and perhaps what makes the program a success. At Morrison's unit, despite its small crew size, there are more than 20 qualified active duty, reserve and auxiliary personnel trained as DART crewmembers.

"Knowing what your search and rescue assets are capable of and understanding what information they need to get the job done is essential to search and rescue mission planning," said Morrison. "The same rules apply, whether you're laying parallel search patterns for a 47-foot motor lifeboat or directing a shallow water skiff down Main Street to a person's front porch."

Working with a 16-foot flat bottom boat may seem straightforward, but after a natural disaster, and when communities are in crisis, DART operations are anything but simple.

"The most obvious challenges faced by our DART crews can be attributed to working in an urban environment," said Morrison. "During the Nashville flood of 2010, parts of the metro area were under two to ten feet of water. Our crews had a difficult time avoiding parked cars and other underwater hazards hidden by muddy water."

The dynamic operational conditions during a flood response require that DART crews have a strong support system. For the

HELPING TO SAFETY


A Coast Guard reservist from Marine Safety Detachment Cincinnati, Ohio's, Disaster Area Response Team wades through floodwaters as he ferries a Brookport, Ill., man to safety after the town flooded, May 4. Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco.





LEADING THE WAY

MK2 Eddie Stommel leads crewmembers of the Coast Guard Cutter Support Team at the Natchez Moorings through the submerged front gate May 20. The crew has built a wall of sandbags and are using pumps to keep water from the the Mississippi River from flooding the unit. Photo by PA2 Patrick Kelley.



support personnel working behind the scenes at command centers, it's all about relationships.

"Sending DARTs blindly into an urban area is ill-advised," stated Morrison. "Not only are there safety hazards that need to be evaluated locally, such as downed power lines and harsh areas, but it's just not good practice to swoop in on someone's turf without first getting the green light."

During this year's flooding, strong working relationships, fostered year-round with local emergency managers, were essential to achieving mission success.


"Interagency cooperation made it easy for our DART crews to go to work augmenting local emergency medical services in western Kentucky and helped open the door to other states and counties," recalled Morrison. "By the end of the operation we had six DARTs and two Coast Guard liaison officers working in four states."

"This isn't the high profile search and rescue that you see on the big screen, this is down and dirty, roll your sleeves up, put on your waders, you're going to get dirty, urban search and rescue."

This year has seen historic flooding strike many communities along the Mississippi River system, and flood response operations continue many weeks later. The rising waters that continue to threaten major flooding across the region bring with them the potential for disaster, but with DARTs on standby, there is comfort in knowing that the Coast Guard remains ever ready.

"Spending a tour on the western rivers has been a real eye-opener for me and I've seen the tremendous value our Coast Guard DART operators bring to the table first hand," said Morrison. "When you're talking about the mandatory evacuation of multiple communities, affecting thousands of people, it's just too much for one municipality to handle on their own. Whether our DART crews were directly saving flood victims from the rising water or helping a community ferry sand bagging equipment to a levee, we made a difference."

DARTs and their 16-foot flat bottom boats bring a whole new meaning to "shallow water sailor." But, as they reinvent one term, they reaffirm the service's legacy of life saving, and safeguarding American citizens when they need it most.

"The folks who run these boats absolutely love it," said Morrison. "This isn't the high profile search and rescue that you see on the big screen, this is down and dirty, roll your sleeves up, put on your waders, you're going to get dirty, urban search and rescue." 

Coast Guard Chaplains Shepherding Shipmates

Story by PA1 Judy Silverstein, PADET St. Petersburg

Faith Observances

Lt. Jose Pimentel, the Reserve Chaplain for the Eleventh Coast Guard District, conducts a Catholic mass to celebrate Ash Wednesday at Integrated Support Command Seattle. Photo by PA3 Tara Molle.



Soft-spoken and articulate, Lt. Joseph Johnson brings a certain calmness that oozes through a room. A placid demeanor belies his jam-packed day. Even in his Coast Guard uniform, he's unmistakably a man of faith.

Known as Padre, Father, L.T., Chaplain, Chaps or AJ, the Sector Mobile Chaplain, offers a quiet presence. And Coast Guardsmen offer nautical metaphors to describe him.

"Being around him and talking to him, is kind of like pulling into a safe harbor in a storm," said Tony Giametti, a 33-year reservist and civilian employee at Sector Mobile.

Johnson is greeted warmly and respectfully throughout the

sector, an area encompassing 500 square miles. When he enters a room - even a bustling Incident Command Post - people look up. Along with National Guard chaplains, he established counseling hours and worship services at IP Mobile last summer during the response to the BP oil spill.

"... We were working long hours and you felt as if you lost a sense of time of day, season and proportion," Giametti said. "My father-in-law was dying...my family was under stress... I had so much on my plate. Those weekly sermons were like having light coming into a room of darkness," said Giametti, a Catholic,

His deep roots in Sector Mobile have allowed him the chance

to get to know a handful of chaplains, including Johnson, a Baptist.

"There are just a lot of good things to be had by getting to know them," he said.

Coast Guard chaplains have a unique history. They fall under the U.S. Navy and few get a Coast Guard assignment. Their history dates back to the earliest days of the Continental Navy. Today, nearly 850 Navy chaplains serve the Marine Corps and Coast Guard. Their affiliation with the Coast Guard dates back to World War I. However, it was under Adm. Robert E. Kramek's tenure as commandant in the late 1980s that their service to the Coast Guard expanded. Currently, 40 active-duty chaplains and 11 reserve chaplains are assigned to the Coast Guard.

It's been said that chaplains save lives.

"The Coast Guard mission is in many way likened to a chaplain's mission to save lives, provide safety, and help people," said Cmdr. Cartus Thornton, Seventh District chaplain. "What more could a chaplain ask for?"

While they have donned the uniform of different services at different times, they are chaplains first and foremost.

"We are a resource Coast Guardsmen can tap into for assistance, not just in the spiritual aspect, but in aspects that will provide

positive support for the whole person," Thornton said.

Despite a shared set of values and attitudes toward faith, their backgrounds are diverse. They span the range from Evangelical to Buddhist, Pentacostal to Jewish, and Hindi to Muslim. Their mission, however, is to provide religious ministry and support to those practicing their faith, to facilitate spiritual practice. They also advise leadership about ethical, moral and spiritual matters.

Unlike assignments in the other DOD services, where chaplains hold weekly services and are attached to a station or a ship, Coast Guard chaplains are mobile. They likely won't know every member in their command. That requires patience, flexibility and a certain ease with people.

Chaplains preside over ceremonies ranging from a ship's commissioning to change of command to weddings and memorial services. Yet ministering to a multi-denominational and multi-cultural audience requires compassion and ongoing discussion. They provide counsel and counseling, techniques for improving communications, and sometimes, make referrals to mental health professionals. They also offer pastoral care for military families and visit those who have been hospitalized.

"We offer a unique perspective, and leadership concerning our people," said Capt. Gary Weeden, Chaplain of the Coast Guard.

A Navy Chaplain delivers a sermon during a burial at sea during World War II



This photo displays many of the tools used by Coast Guard Chaplains.



His numerous Coast Guard assignments as a Navy Chaplain include the Coast Guard Academy and Atlantic Area. He once served as a reservist and a Marine Science Technician at the Coast Guard Oceanographic Institute. He is also the father of a Coast Guardsman, which provides an invaluable perspective.

"One of the blessings of my work," said Weeden "is working with my colleagues from other faiths. There are so many things we learn from one another."

That's helpful given unpredictable days. They include briefings and paperwork, counseling sessions and phone calls, just like other military leaders. Their days may be disrupted by the hospitalization of a Coast Guardsman. And while rare, sometimes they minister in the aftermath of suicide. Chaplains also sit down with families after a crew is unexpectedly lost. In the case of the crew of airplane HC-130 1705, they balanced notification and updates, sensitively coordinating many players. Their work also involved survivor counseling.

"If you look at the DOD's casualty website, it's something

they deal with constantly," said Weeden. "But the Coast Guard doesn't."

"Bringing a steady presence and offering spiritual leadership requires that we maintain our own rhythm of work and rest (and spiritual reflection) so that we can lead and/or step alongside our Coast Guard family during those challenging times, out of a renewed spirit and not exhaustion," Weeden said.

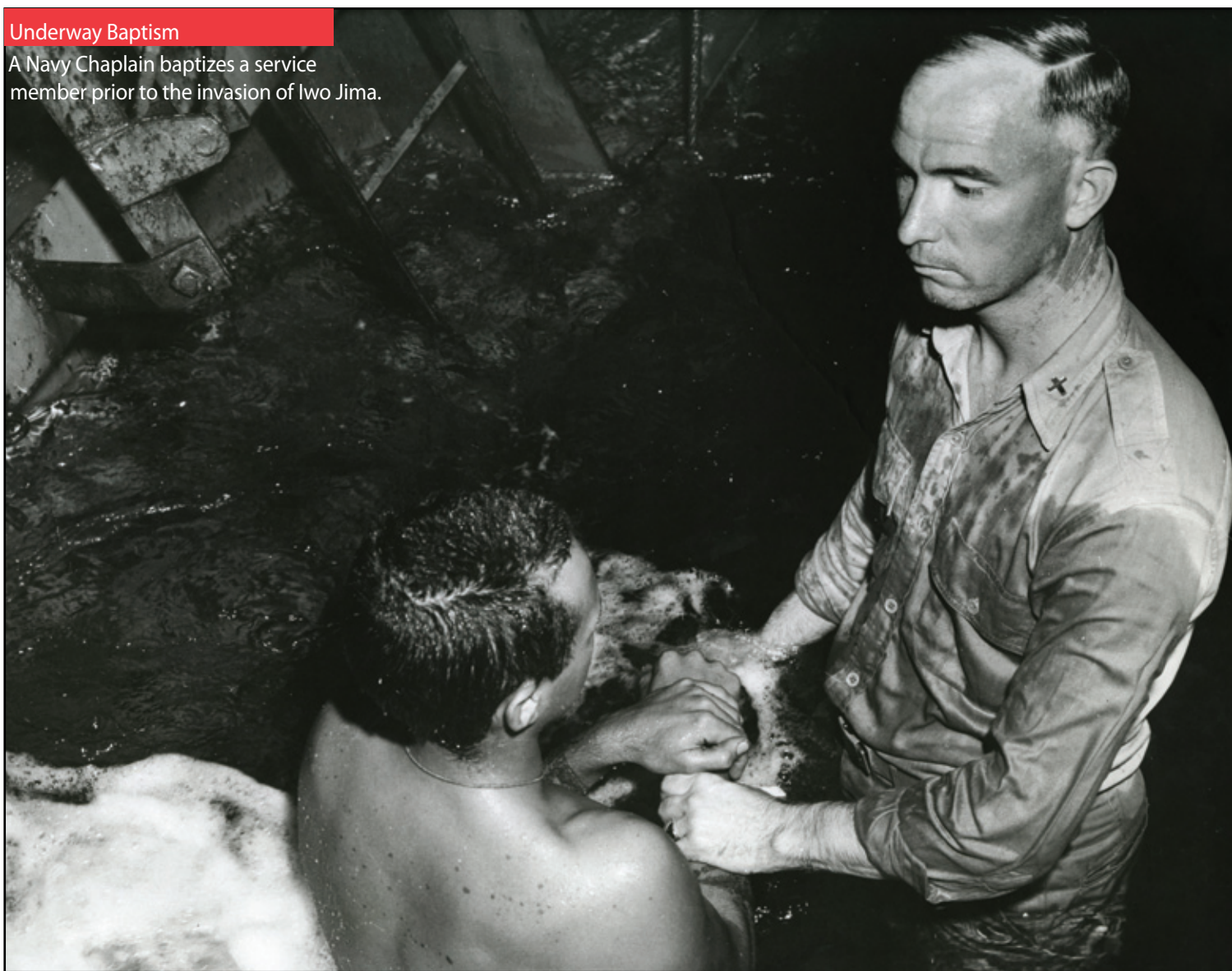
Adm. Bob Papp's designation of the Year of the Family helps address challenges posed by a changing world, economy and military. At its core is the theme of resiliency, intended to help mitigate stress and strengthen skills. That's a good fit for the work chaplains do.

"We focus on offering tools and building perspective," Weeden said.

On Florida's west coast, about 220 Coast Guardsman recently completed Financial Peace University. Collectively, they paid off more than \$1 million in debt. Chaplains hope to see that model followed throughout the Coast Guard.

Underway Baptism

A Navy Chaplain baptizes a service member prior to the invasion of Iwo Jima.



"Financial stress can be at the core of marital stress," said Lt. Jerry Durham, chaplain at Sector St. Petersburg.

Chaplains also preside over unit deployments, sometimes meeting them in theater, and welcoming them home. Then there are the more sober calls to families when a member is injured, or killed.

Because they transition from consoling to celebrations such as a Coast Guard Academy commencement or boot camp graduation, they too must remain resilient or *Semper Paratus*.


"Our challenge is that not every kind of stress is linked to a critical incident," said Weeden. "Grief and loss, ethical and moral concerns, the wear and tear of multiple deployments are stressors too."

Last year was especially taxing. From a devastating earthquake in Haiti, to the response of nearly 8,000 active duty, reserve and civilian members to the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, to reservists returning to an uncertain job market, the brisk operational tempo made its impact. Navy chaplains have seen

their share of battle deployments. Though covered by the Geneva Convention as non-combatants they have served in dangerous and trying times.

"Haiti was just like being in battle," said Durham. "The devastation was immense. One of my jobs was to keep an eye on folks and ensure they were okay."

Chaplains juggle stress as well. Balance comes in the form of contemplative time. As a group, they have a wide span of interests and training that bodes well for our service. They are disarmingly forthright, yet professional.

Their small and mobile ministry accomplishes much and it's available to civilian, reserve and active duty members. They have also harnessed social media to expand their reach. On their Facebook page, messages range from offering prayer following the capture of Osama Bin Laden, to providing mental health information. Their unique ability to serve enlisted and officers, the Coast Guard and Navy while providing a steady presence, offers balance in challenging times. 



PLANNING OPS

Coast Guard Cmdr. Louie Parks, director of OPBAT, discusses a recent law enforcement case with members of the Drug Enforcement Administration and Royal Bahamas Police Force Drug Enforcement Unit in Nassau, Bahamas, May 5.

Joint Operations

Story and photos by
PA2 Nicholas Ameen,
7th District

Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos is a Seventh Coast Guard District unit headquartered within the U.S. Embassy in downtown Nassau, Bahamas. OPBAT was established in June 1982 to combat drug and migrant smuggling, and perform search and rescue missions.

Ten active-duty Coast Guardsmen are assigned full-time to OPBAT in Nassau, while aircrews cycle in and out of OPBAT's forward operating locations.

At any given time, a helicopter crew from Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater, Fla., is deployed to Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands, as well as the Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center on Andros Island, Bahamas, in support of OPBAT, conducting law enforcement patrols and carrying out search and rescue cases.

Without OPBAT, the closest response unit would be Coast Guard Air Station Miami, which would only be able to cover about a sixth of the geography covered by OPBAT.

"OPBAT is important to the Coast Guard because we have visibility and a projection of the southeastern border of the United States and we're able to maintain maritime domain

awareness of a key approach zone to the U.S.,” said OPBAT Director Cmdr. Louie Parks. “Today’s problem in the Turks and Caicos Islands and the Bahamas is tomorrow’s problem in the United States.

“It’s been the most enjoyable

and challenging job I’ve ever had,” said Parks. “It takes far more effort, patience and dedication to work effectively with our partner agencies than I really thought. It takes a lot of understanding of the differences in organizational cultures to be able to move forward with the Coast Guard mission.”

An Interagency Effort

Throughout the Coast Guard, unit personnel are constantly working alongside state, local, federal and international agencies. This concept is the backbone of OPBAT.

OPBAT is led by the DEA, but within the walls of the U.S. Embassy in Nassau are personnel from the Coast Guard, CBP Air and Marine Branch, the U.S. Navy, the State Department, ICE,

and the Government of the Bahamas working together to achieve mission readiness and execution.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection Attaché Emory Ellis is the sole representative for the CBP Air and Marine Branch at OPBAT.

Ellis oversees CBP Air and Marine Branch

asset placement within OPBAT’s area of responsibility. More specifically, he works to position assets to interdict suspect vessels. He accomplishes this by calling on four locations, each home to unique aircraft.

“It starts with detection, then we sort targets down,” said Ellis. “From there we intercept, arrest, prosecute and convict. If we don’t get them in jail, they’ll just be back out on the sea again.”

Ellis works closely with the Coast Guard to intercept suspect vessels once they’re spotted. There are many pieces to the puzzle; however, the interagency cooperation is very much in place.

Navy Lt. Chris Papavasiliou works for the Tactical Analysis Team. The TAT itself is unique, as it is part of both the Joint

“It’s definitely a mutual benefit and a mutual commitment.”



JOINT TEAM

Personnel from the Coast Guard, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Royal Bahamas Police Force Drug Enforcement Unit in front of a DEA helicopter, May 5, in Nassau, Bahamas.

Interagency Task Force – South based in Key West, Fla., and Northern Command based in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Papavasiliou serves as a conduit from JIATF-S and NORTHCOM to OPBAT, ensuring proper dissemination of information. Apart from keeping all these agencies aligned, Papavasiliou is also charged with acquiring the necessary resources to perform various missions.

“I also track trends, documenting and logging information, regardless of the magnitude,” said Papavasiliou. “It’s a long-term project, but over time I hope to get enough information to make a big leap within the mission.”

Standing The Watch

On the third floor of the U.S. Embassy in Nassau, the OPBAT command center is home to a 24/7/365 watch. The command center walls are covered with nautical charts of the Caribbean Sea and large flat panel computer displays. Six additional computer monitors, along with a plethora of telephones, microphones and communications equipment surround the watchstanders during their 12-hour shift.

At 10:30 a.m. May 4, Lt. Eliezer Gonzalez has already been on watch for four hours. He answers a barrage of phone calls, most of which relate to a possible developing search and rescue case in the area.

A single Coast Guardsman stands the 12-hour long watch, and there are just six OPBAT watchstanders sharing the load; Gonzalez is the senior-most. The other five are comprised of a lieutenant junior grade, a chief petty officer, and three operations specialists.

“There’s limited supervision, and you have to be great at



multitasking,” said Gonzalez. “It’s like a miniature command center, without all the surface assets you’d find at a Coast Guard sector, so you need to be very resourceful. We utilize the Royal Bahamas Defence Force, as well as the Bahamas Air-Sea Rescue Association.”

OPBAT watchstanders also use Coast Guard units transiting through their area of responsibility when possible, he added.

Gonzalez says much of the watch deals with passing intelligence reports and information concerning developing law enforcement cases, but there are also many search and rescue missions that unfold in the Bahamas.

Mutual Benefit, Mutual Commitment

“We have a mutually dependent relationship with the Bahamians,” said Parks. “They trust us and respect us enough to support us through the ship rider program.”

The ship rider program embeds Bahamian law enforcement agents aboard Coast Guard cutters and aircraft to offer intimate knowledge of the area, as well as operational access to Bahamian waters and territorial seas.

“They are the maritime domain awareness and subject matter experts for this area,” said Parks. “Without that knowledge, expertise and access, there’s no way we’d be able to do what we do. It takes that kind of bold and courageous partnering on their part to allow the program to flourish.

“But at the same time, the United States, with a much larger economic engine, has the resources and the capacity that we can leverage with that access that the Bahamians give us to run the OPBAT program,” said Parks. “It’s definitely a mutual benefit and a mutual commitment.”

READY TO GO

A Drug Enforcement Administration helicopter and a Coast Guard MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter on deck in Nassau, Bahamas, May 5.



Coast Guard responds to the 1937 Ohio and Mississippi River Valley Flood

Story by Chris Havern, Deputy Coast Guard Historian



Coast Guardsmen rescuing civilians in Lawrenceburg, Ohio.

A period of heavy rainfall and melting snow this spring saw the Ohio and Mississippi rivers exceed record flood levels. The rivers' waters rose so high that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had to demolish an earthen levee, resulting in the sacrifice of Missouri farmland in order to spare the city of Cairo, Ill., located at the confluence of the two great rivers.

The preceding record for flood levels was established during the winter of 1937 and saw the inundation of cities from Cincinnati to New Orleans. Even though corrective steps were taken following the floods of 1927 to prevent the recurrence of such disasters, the heavy rainfall of January and February 1937 resulted in unprecedented crests of the rivers. According to the United States Weather Bureau, the rainfall resulted from irregular weather patterns which saw abnormal barometric pressures and the colliding of warm, moist southern tropical air masses with cooler northern polar air masses. The resulting precipitation from the collision of these fronts dropped an estimated 165 billion tons of water in the Ohio and Mississippi

River Basin. This was enough to cover over 200,000 square miles of land to a depth of over 11 inches. In only 12 days, January 13-24, Louisville, Ky., received 15 inches of rain. More than 19 inches of rain fell during January. As a result, 70 percent of the city was submerged, forcing 175,000 residents to flee. Across the river 90 percent of Jeffersonville, Ind., was flooded. One contemporary source estimated that the flood did \$250,000,000, in 1937 dollars, of damage to the area. The extent of the damage throughout the Ohio and Mississippi river valleys caused the American Red Cross to claim that the deluge shattered all previous records for natural disasters in the United States.


At the direction of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, the Coast Guard mounted the largest relief expedition in the history of the service to that point. The Coast Guard mustered a relief force of 142 officers and 1,706 enlisted men to assist the Red Cross in responding to these massive surges. Units from the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, in addition to stations

on the Great Lakes, provided men and equipment. Capt. LeRoy Reinburg, Commandant of the Coast Guard Depot at Curtis Bay, Md., was placed in command of the Coast Guard's effort. He initially established his headquarters at Evansville, Ind. Later, he moved his headquarters to Memphis, Tenn., as the crest advanced southward down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico.

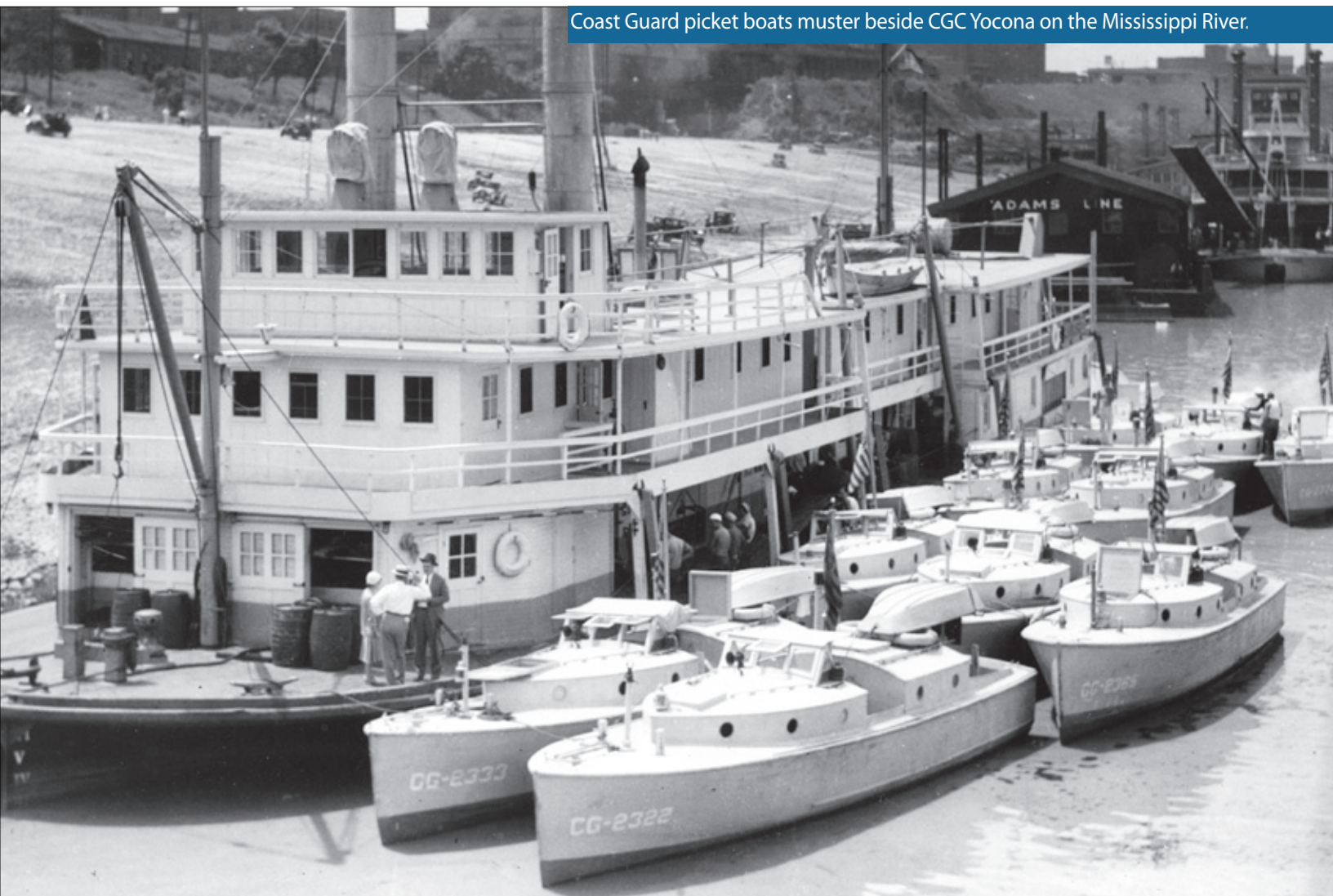
Rescue operations extended from Jan. 19, through March 11 and involved 351 boats of all types. In addition, 24 cutters ranging from 75-foot "Six-Bitters" to 165-foot patrol boats were sent to assist in saving life and property. The Coast Guard chartered special trains to facilitate the transportation of many of these craft from their stations to the focal points on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Along with boats and cutters, the Coast Guard employed additional assets to include 12 aircraft. Ten of these were amphibious, operating on land and water. These aircraft were used in reconnaissance work and in delivering medicines and medical workers. The other two aircraft, transport planes, flew in large quantities of supplies from the Eastern seaboard into the affected areas. The Coast Guard also deployed 12 portable radio sets and 12 communications trucks which served as mobile radio stations. These contributed to the establishment of an emergency radio network that included 244 stations.

In responding to the floods, the Coast Guard faced some very interesting dilemmas. In Cincinnati, for example, the flood waters of the Ohio River caused the spill of thousands of gallons of gasoline from storage tanks. This fuel was ignited and, ironically, produced fires in buildings surrounded by water. In response, the Coast Guard

boats pumped the flood waters into the already inundated buildings to extinguish the flames and prevent the spread of fire. The winter temperatures also saw floating ice in the northern-most parts of the rivers. These small icebergs were hazards to navigation and sometimes resulted in the capsizing of rescue craft. Reports of discrimination by local authorities in the rescue of non-whites in distress had reached the headquarters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. This caused the organization's Assistant Secretary, Roy Wilkins, to make an appeal to the Commandant of the Coast Guard, Rear Adm. Russell R. Waesche to ask that the Coast Guard ensure that local authorities rendered assistance to all those in need regardless of race. In response Waesche gave his assurances that the Coast Guard was making no discrimination "in rescue and relief operations" and forwarded an instruction to Captain Reinburg that "no discrimination is shown."

The Treasury Department's Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1937 stated, "The relief force, besides rescuing 839 persons from peril, transported 67,613 refugees to safety, afforded transportation to thousands of Red Cross officials and relief workers, saved 1,993 head of livestock, carried mail, towed disabled boats and floating buildings to safety, helped to restore telephone and telegraph service, aided in preventing looting, and otherwise extended all aid within its power to be of assistance." This 1937 relief operation marked a milestone in the Coast Guard's tradition of response to natural disasters and served as precursor to the service's response on the Gulf coast to Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita in the late summer and fall of 2005. 

Coast Guard picket boats muster beside CGC Yocona on the Mississippi River.





U.S. COAST GUARD

FOR SALE
This building
is for sale
and will
be sold
at once
if desired
call on
the agent

Coast Guardsmen moored to a lamppost dispatch a dinghy in a flooded town.





NEW LEADERSHIP

Rear Adm. Sandra Stosz accepts congratulations from Rear Adm. J. Scott Burhoe after assuming command of the Coast Guard Academy, June 3. Stosz became the first female superintendent of any of the U.S. service academies. Photo by PA2 Patrick Kelley.